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RUBY LIND

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DRAWINGS OF RUBY LIND

(MRS. WILL DYSON)

1887-1919



Ruby Lind.

*Second
92 Victoria St
S. W.*

THE DRAWINGS OF RUBY LIND.

(M^{RS} WILL. DYSON)



CECIL PALMER
LONDON 1920

RUBY LIND



TWO hours before midnight on the night of March the 12th, 1919, died Ruby Lindsay at her home at Chelsea. . . . With her went from the world one of those rare beings whose existence is a compensation for the uglier travail of our world.

Life confounds us in our pessimism by throwing up phenomena of a spiritual or material beauty, the mere contemplation of which is a lessening of the miseries that living involves. She was of the nature of such.

Here was a being in the presence of whom we were uplifted by the feeling that a sweet and working approximation to perfection was after all a realisable quality. For it seemed so simple and so effortless a thing for her to be this, and a thing involving no meticulous refinements of our common frailties out of existence. . . . It was no remote spiritual quality in her that made us wonder by what process of mad elaboration we others were going so far astray. . . .

The mean, the thwarted, the pitiful, fill us with sadness by seeming to be an inevitable outcome of our day. She made them seem less inevitable—more a pathetic and avoidable going wrong. . . . The life that blossomed into this loveliness was a life that had acquitted itself of its own poor condemnations. The tree that grew this fruit was a tree to be judged less harshly. . . .

It was not her beauty alone—a loveliness that at all times had the fresh frankness of a child's—which made her friendship and love the unique remembered treasure of some lives. It was not her happy unbookish humour—or the half-shy and generous affection upon which we could all draw. For all these things we loved her. But it was her absolute rightness in a world where the rest of us are so sadly misfitted—and sadly know the desolating extent of our misfitting—that made her a thing of reassurance—a reawakening of belief in life. God or things, we said,

may have twisted us awry—her they had not—our modern maladies seemed curable.

Nor was our devotion due to a goodness in her that was too good for the rough usages of earth. The potency of her charm was in its earthly reality, its human feasibility. She seemed a saint not in revolt against this earth and achieving her beauty by mortifications, but one who had never heard of another earth, so native did she seem to this. With her we felt that life to be unvile needed no mutilation—we wondered why it had seemed vile.

It was a recognition of this unique quality that made her going mourned by strangers who had perhaps met her once in drawing-room or studio never again to forget the charm of her shy and diffident cheerfulness.

This shyness she could never lose—in spite of courageous battling with it. Such shyness is a torment to the possessor, but it at least preserves in women a fragrance so easily diffused! Never was she so happily boastful as after some successful overcoming of her demon—after an interview with such a potential evil as an editor or publisher during which she had behaved she fondly hoped with the hard efficiency of a trained man of affairs.

There was a beautiful extravagance in her ignorance of the ritual of life—a sort of charming Hibernianism—that was an agony to her, but a fund of cruel joy to us. She was somewhat like a rather preoccupied dryad or some such garden thing masquerading as a citizeness of the world, and mortified by the failure of her deception. Not that she ever failed in achieving an efficiency in anything she undertook. She succeeded instinctively where most people fail rationally, but she yearned vainly for the rationality. She paraded it before us with the most transparent pride whenever she felt she had achieved it.

Her country-side terror of the unknown “world” never left her. How it haunted her beneath her happy and resilient vitality during those early days in Melbourne! It made that first perilous venture into the penurious life of the girl art student partake of the nature of heroism. She never lost it—that fantastic ignorance of Life’s *acquired* characteristics that was hers when first as a dazzlingly fresh and lovely school girl she was attempting the impossible—attempting to live, and with grim persistence to work, on little more than ten shillings a week, mainly drawn as an illustrator from a struggling weekly paper, an attempt that only ended with the inevitable and terrifying collapse.

This ignorance she had, but coupled always with a natural and infallible instinct about life itself, an instinct that seemed to be in part the imprint and colour lent to her life by her mother’s beautiful personality.

In this was her contribution to the solution of the problems of her few friends—friends probably reasoning themselves elaborately wrong. To her

husband, so given to entangling himself in his own subtleties, this instinct of hers so often pointed unerringly to the rightness at which the male in him failed to arrive by laborious processes of ratiocination. These were her humorously paraded triumphs.

Right judgments were a simple matter with her. She arrived at them at one illogical bound. There is this characteristic capacity in the minds of essential women—that they can more often than others, and in spite of the sophistication of age and experience, keep that capacity for sweeping simplifications which belongs to the child.

It seems as though they have within them an unvarying and mystic standard—the primitive rectitude of our mysterious origin, sitting in immediate and instinctive judgment. They are the repository of all the wisdom of our kind that has become instinctive—the embodiment of the nobilities of our origin! Our aims may falter, but these, our origins, are proved—tested—affirmed—authoritative—and back to these we must always come, as to our basic rightness, as to our starting point—to the breasts that suckled us. They are the Mother—Fact—Permanence—fixed and abiding health. . . . They have—such women—as she had, an unvarying common-sense, a worldly sagacity—an infinite capacity for victimisation without disillusion. She was the victim of a thousand deceptions—of a thousand jokes of children and of friends. She resented the deception—with anger, with humour, with contempt for that lovely part of her she called her “country bumpkinness”—but the deceivers never deceived her—if to be deceived is to be robbed. They left her always with the same generous enthusiasm, the same quick unquestioned sympathy.

The happy balance of her nature was in everything she did. Her work seemed to have been achieved in happiness—though it was born of anguish and sore travail. Those gracious hands were designed to produce that lovely line and no other—a line that has a sweetness surpassed by no pen draughtsmen of our time. It was a misfortune that this talent was not recognised for the happy thing it was. It was perhaps due to her almost morbid modesty that even to her few intimate friends she was thought of, less as one who did beautiful and happy things, than as one who was them. What tragedy was in her life was due to the thwarting of her craftsman’s passion—those fingers, that could do with untutored and intuitive skill anything beautiful that human fingers might be called upon to do, ached to be so employed.

But it was only a comparatively disjointed attention she could in her latter years devote to it.

The tragedy of the mother who is also artist, is that either the artist or the child must suffer. To her this was no open question: the last was unthinkable—but the first remained a source of pain—a thing that peeped

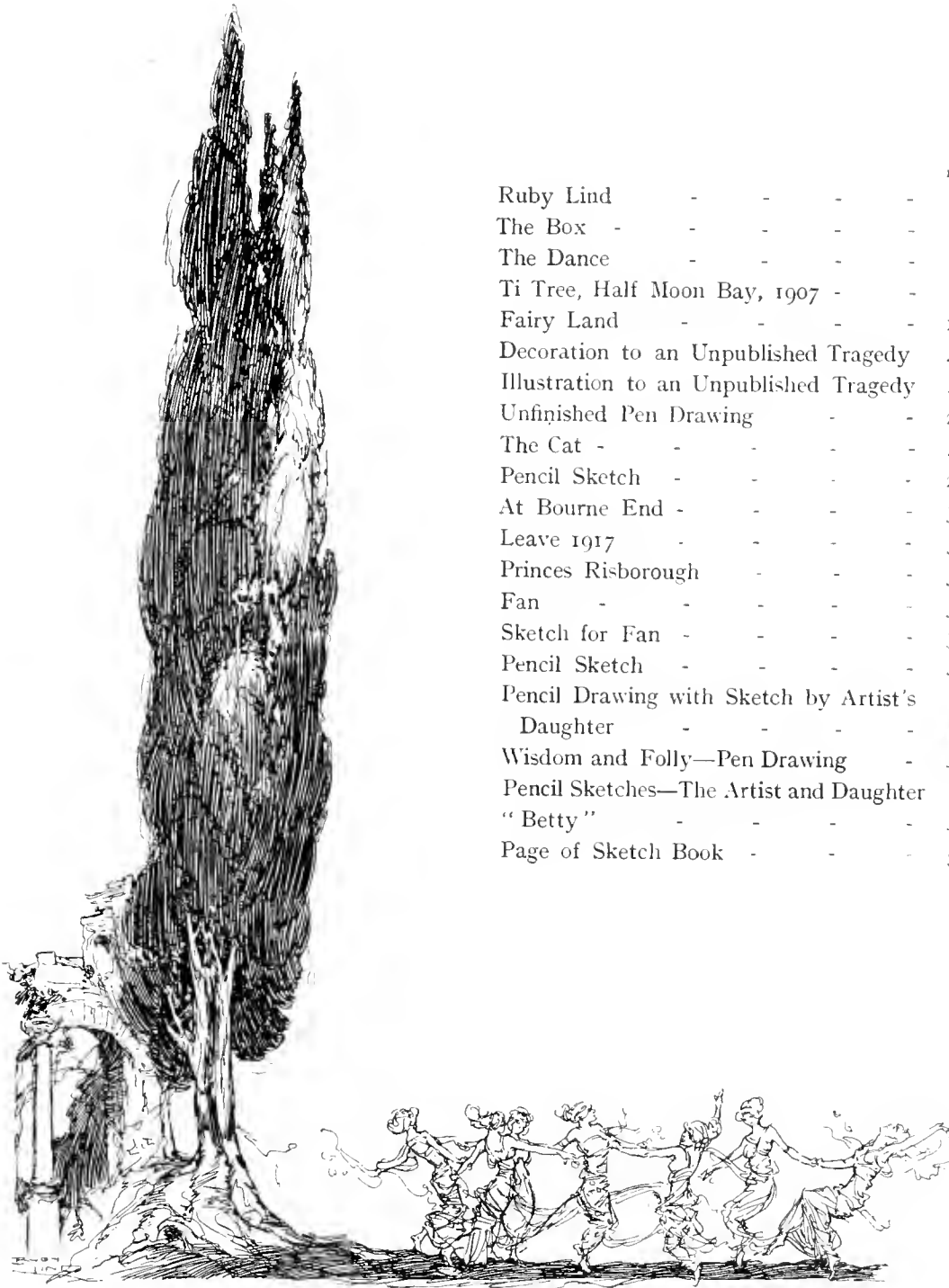
through the happiness of her unremitting and always anxious love for her child.

Death is only death to the best and the worst of us—but it seemed to us that her going had a tragedy and a poignancy above other deaths. Both in the departure itself and in the nature of the going were elements that moved us as no other deaths will. She lived through the anguish and the anxieties common to all who have had husbands and brothers and men friends and little children during the dreadful years from 1914—with her share of loss and sorrow and of privation. Her death came after the Armistice, when it seemed that we might dare to hope again. The little denials of little desirable things seemed to be at an end. She had spent a fortnight of rest in Ireland—her first real holiday since the war—and returned in a haste of expectation to make a dress for an artist ball that was to be for her the happy resurrection of all the suppression of the war. The dress was never finished—she died of that plague which is the inevitable consummation of all our wars; on the night of the ball. She died clasping in her hand a newly-arrived letter from her daughter. It contained childish hints of surprises for her mother's approaching birthday. . . .

It was as though War before departing utterly from us had added her death as a foot-note, to enrich with a final commentary the tale of his crowded horror.

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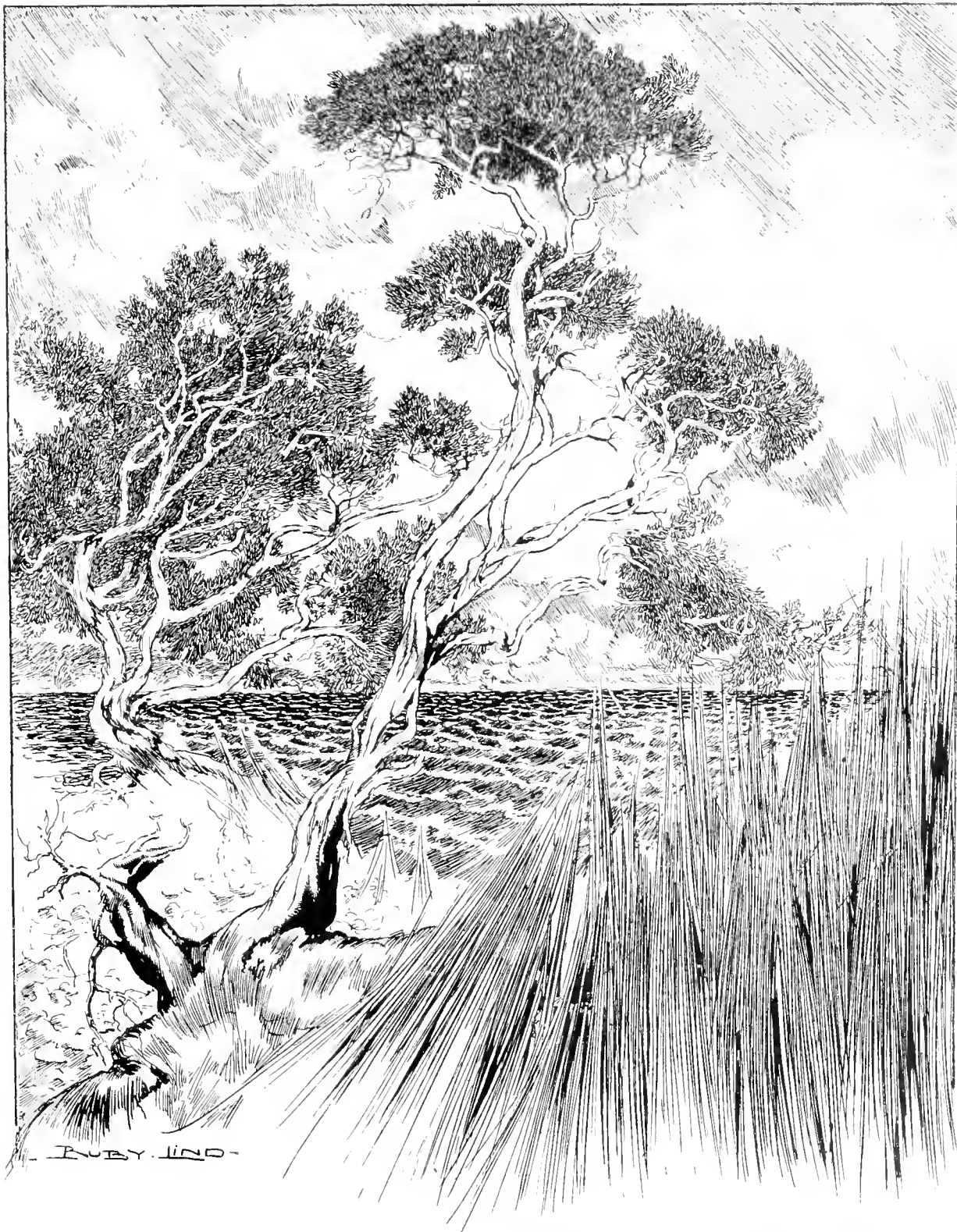




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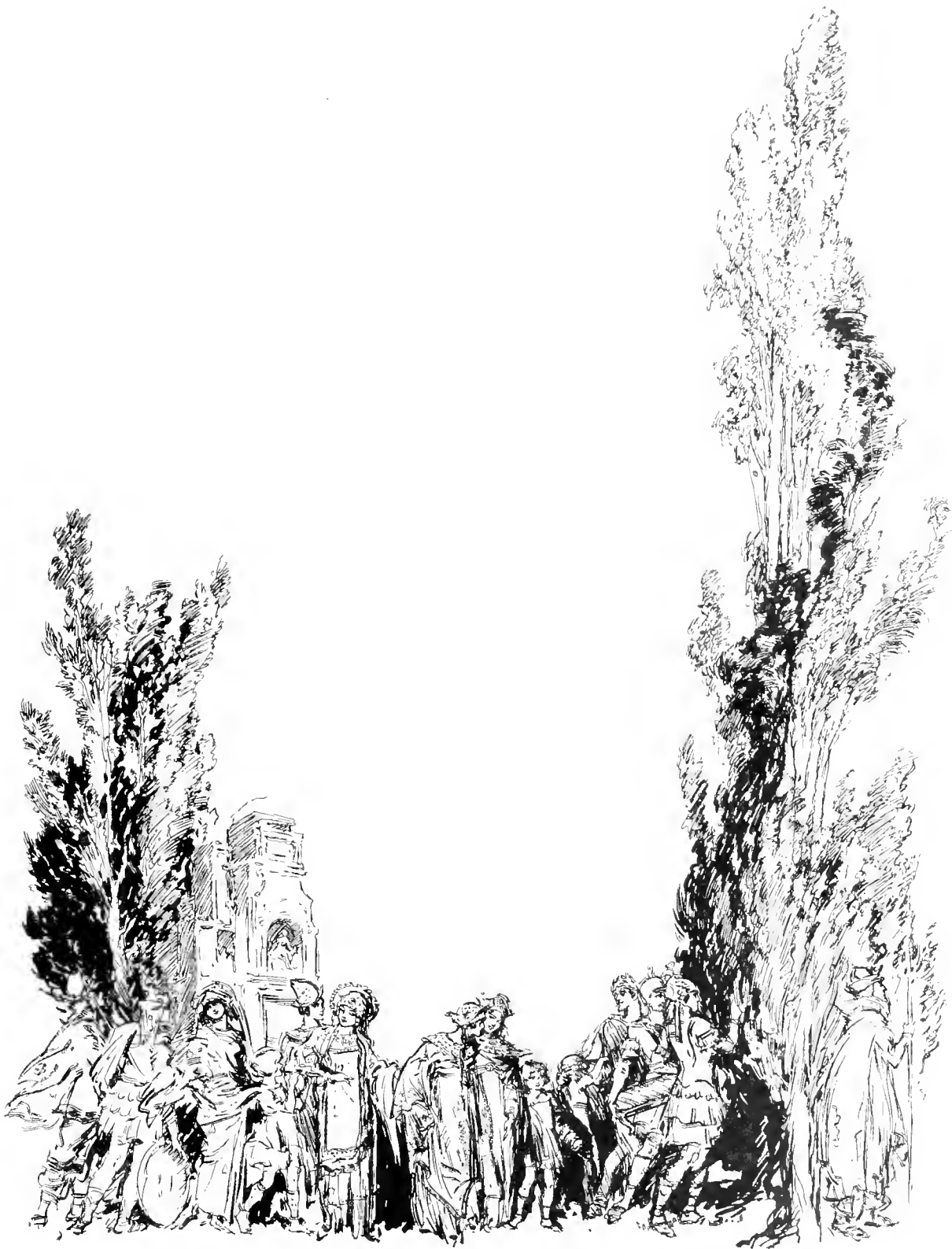
The Dance



Early Drawing. Ti Tree, Half Moon Bay, 1907



Fairy Land



Decoration to an Unpublished Tragedy



Illustration to an Unpublished Tragedy





Unfinished Pen Drawing



The Cat



Pencil Sketch



At Bourne End



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Princes Risborough



Princes Wistonsale





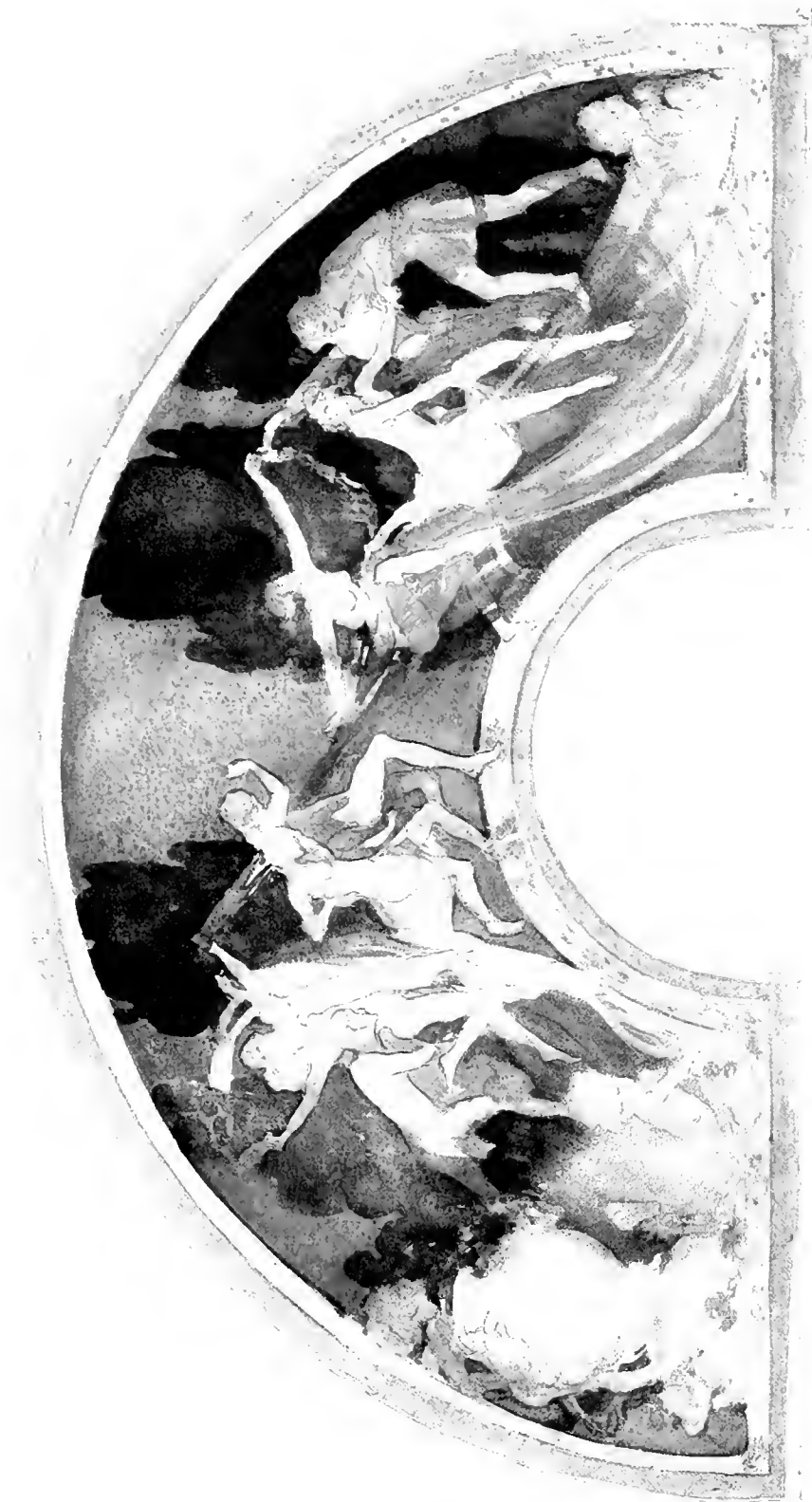
Form





Sketch for Ivan

Sketch for Form





Pencil Sketch



Power Sketch





Pencil Drawing with Sketch by Artist's Daughter

Pencil Drawing with Sketch by Artist's Daughter



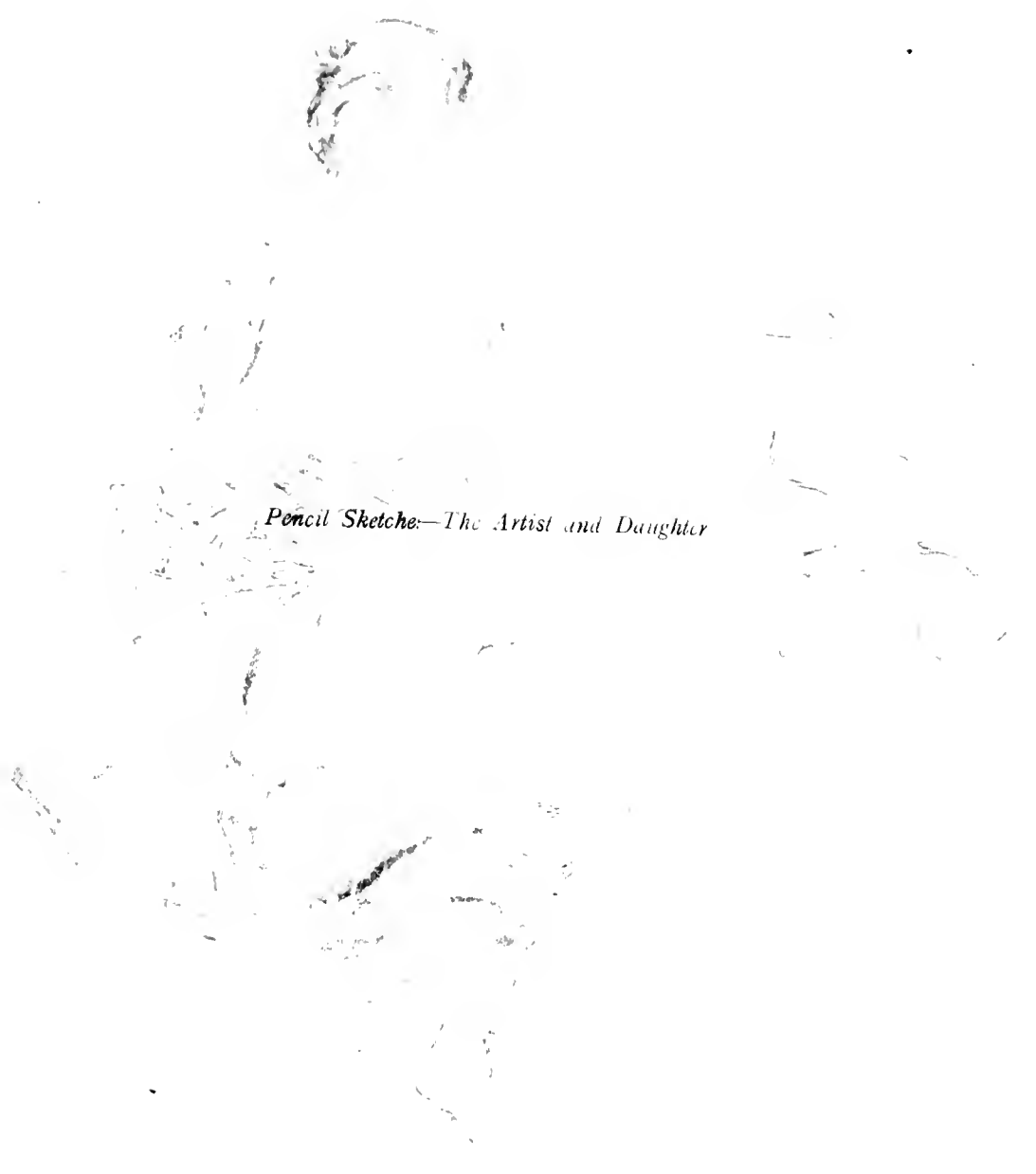


Wisdom and Folly—Pen Drawing

Wisdom and Folly—Per Drawing







Pencil Sketch:—The Artist and Daughter

Pencil Sketches—The Artist and Daughter

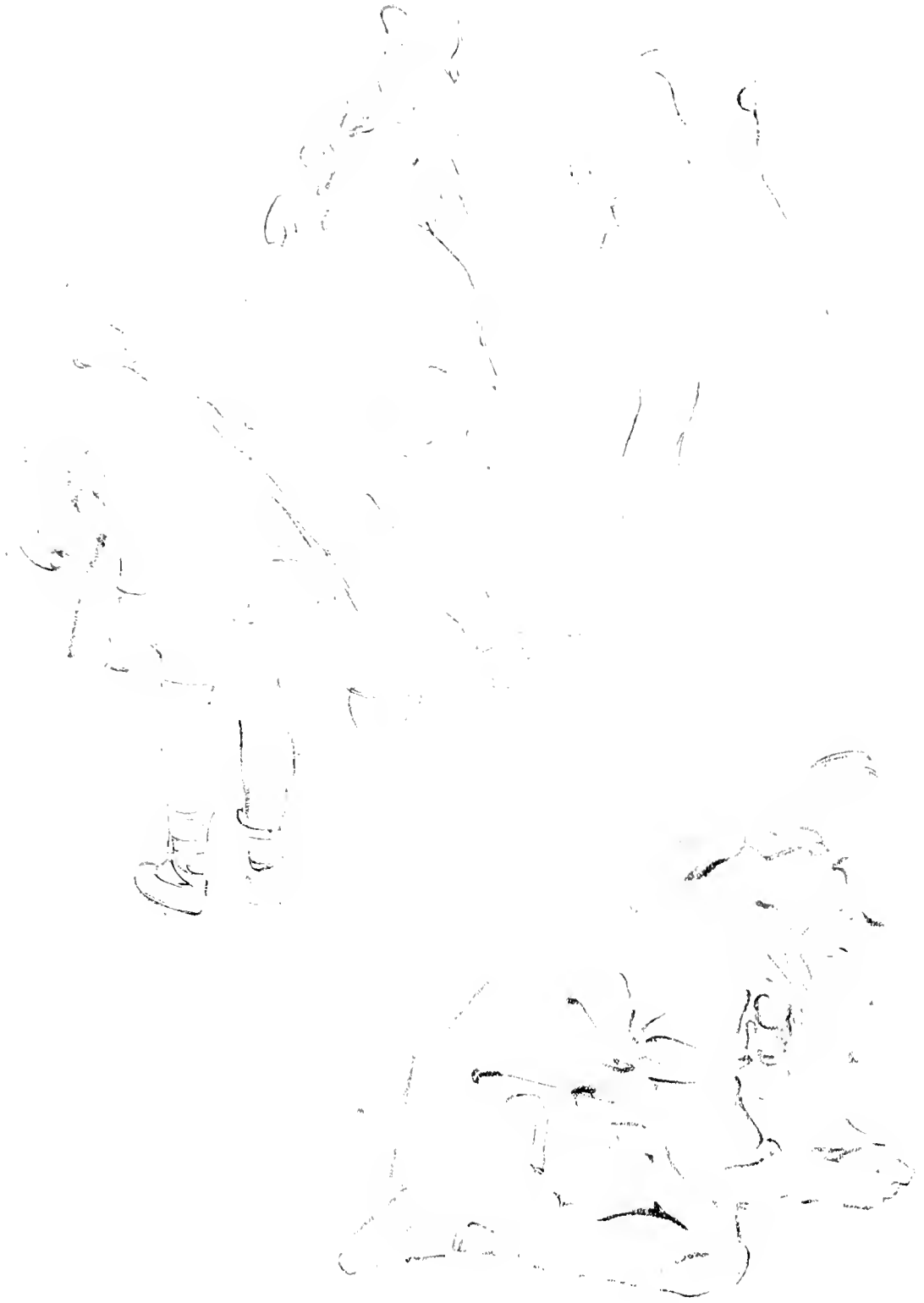




"Betty"



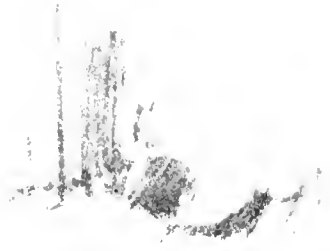
“ Betty ,



1871
1872



Page of Sketch Book



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